

For Immediate Release

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*Washington, D.C.*-- Today, U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood announced that Amtrak will receive nearly \$450 million in high speed rail funding to increase reliability and speed in the Northeast Corridor, which runs from Washington, DC to Boston, MA. These funds were reprogrammed from the \$2 billion that Florida Governor Rick Scott rejected .

“I am pleased that the Department of Transportation recognizes that the Northeast Corridor represents the most viable candidate for true high speed rail,” said Congressman Sires. “By granting this award to Amtrak, the Northeast Corridor will be improved tremendously and commuters across the Northeast will benefit.”

On February 16, 2011, Florida Governor Rick Scott declined the \$2.4 billion in federal high speed rail funding that was expected to build high speed rail from Tampa to Orlando, Florida. On March 4, 2011, Congressman Sires and 38 Members of Congress sent a bi-partisan letter to Secretary LaHood requested that the rejecting funding be reprogrammed to the Northeast Corridor.

This funding to Amtrak will be used to make upgrades in one of the most heavily used sections of the Northeast Corridor (NEC). Upgraded power facilities will reduce power failures that occur in this section of the NEC. Additionally, this project will create a 24 mile segment of track between New Brunswick and Trenton, NJ that will allow trains to reach 160 miles per hour. High speed rail interlocking investments will permit express trains to pass local trains, which will reduce congestion and delay.

“New Jersey is ready for this opportunity to have Amtrak increase capacity and improve reliability,” said Sires. “Commuters in New Jersey and those traveling through New Jersey will benefit from these updates that are long overdue.”

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